

World Baseball Classic: Pool A - Cuba vs Puerto Rico

Tuesday, 10 March, 2026

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Hiram Bithorn Stadium

Team Puerto Rico

Yadier Molina

Postgame Press Conference

Puerto Rico 4, Cuba 1

Q. In three games Puerto Rico's pitching 0.64 ERA, 31 strikeouts, out of 4 runs, 2 were earned. Talking about the work of the pitchers, but it's an example of the work that pitching has done in Puerto Rico.

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, thank you. I'm happy with the victory. You said it all, the pitching carried us in this series. The offense did what was necessary. We scored the necessary runs to win.

Yes, I'm with you. Pitching was necessary, and I'm really happy for that.

Q. Since day one, you emphasized the ability of the guys getting quality at-bats. Today we saw MJ take a walk with 10 pitches with a grinding at-bat that gave Martin a chance to hit that double that gave us the advantage. Then Heliot Ramos, before his first hit, also walked with nine pitches. How do you keep the guys focused on the game plan at the plate?

YADIER MOLINA: Well, as I say, we're working hard with the guys together with the hitting coaches, Edgar and Igor and all the guys are all working hard. We're working towards more. Yesterday we started slow. We had a game that ended up winning in the last at-bat.

You saw Martin's important at-bat, Captain Martin. We know we're not an offensive team, but everybody knows that, but we do the little things, getting walks and playing small ball, and we think that our strength, as always, is pitching and defense.

Q. Congratulations on the victory. I want to ask you about the challenge to be in a Baseball Classic because today you got the classification, but tomorrow you have an important game that could determine whether you avoid the U.S. What do you think when



you're in the dugout and you have to think about what pitchers to bring in the game? Do I bring Sugar in?

YADIER MOLINA: Obviously we have the best in the country, and that's how I see it. I can't think of anyone else. We have to trust the talent we have. Obviously it's what we have, and I trust them.

We know that tomorrow is an important game. As you said, tomorrow José De León is going to start. He's been in this scenario many times. Last time he pitched a no-hitter, a perfect game, and we trust him.

What can I say? With the other guys, we have to sit down and do a lineup and ask the guys who they are. It's been three tough days. After that, we'll see how we line up tomorrow.

Q. Team Puerto Rico has put a nice collection of nice young players, we saw Darell with the walk-off home run. Elmer Rodriguez, Cruz starting today. What has been your impression of the young talent on the team?

YADIER MOLINA: As a young team, these players, they don't take anything for granted. They love to learn every day. We've have some veterans, and they care about the young guys. They're good listeners, they play hard, and I trust them. They play real well. We have a really good group. It's a young core, and I'm happy for that.

Q. Do you have a starter for tomorrow's set?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes.

Q. Who is that?

YADIER MOLINA: José De León.

Q. And in terms of having a quarterfinal spot booked, does that impact some of your plans for your players? Do you maybe want to rest somebody? Does it give you some flexibility to change your lineup?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes, I'm going to talk to the players



now. Just now I didn't have the opportunity, but I'm going to talk to them right now and see how we feel. Talk to Arenado and see how he feels. Talk to Castro and see how he feels. I'm going to the players, and after I talk to them, we'll see how -- yeah, we care. We're going to come out and try to put the best team out there to try to win the game. We trust everyone, and I know whoever we put in, they're going to give me 100 percent.

Q. Congratulations for the classification to the second round. My question is with this victory Puerto Rico is able to get the pass to the second round. Since 2006, Puerto Rico has done it four times. You've done it four times as a player and as a coach. We've seen different teams that have been favorites and others not so favored. We've always been one of the great baseball powers. From your perspective, how do we achieve this achievement?

YADIER MOLINA: Well, that's a good analysis. The Puerto Rican talent is very good. We have good ballplayers, and you all have seen it. Obviously there are many who could not be here who are really good players, that are elite, but we have a lot of young guys, like the ones that we have on the team that love the jersey, they sweat the jersey, and to be able to do it with this group is really, really special.

Q. Yadier, you won the championship for Puerto Rico with the Caguas Criollos. You took Magallanes them to the championship. The game against Panama, was that the rematch that the world of baseball had for you to place you as a candidate to be a quality manager in the Big Leagues?

YADIER MOLINA: The way I see it is that I am still learning and I am maturing as a coach. I have learned a lot in terms of how to manage the players, how to try to help them and to coach them. I think that it has been a great experience abroad with the winter baseball in Dominican Republic and Venezuela, and I've had a lot of coaches with me that have taught me a lot.

I go little by little. I keep on learning. I'm maturing. Obviously if we win here, the triumph belongs to the guys. They sweat the jersey. If we lose, it's my fault. I mean, you have to know that.

But I keep on learning, and we hope to God that what is for me will be for me whenever he wants, and whenever, I'm going to be ready for that.

Q. You talked about the setup of the lineup for tomorrow. There is a moment that could be special for Martin, which it's going to be his last game in Puerto

Rico tomorrow. You've been alternating catchers between him and Christian. You also brought Martin as a DH. Do you see him at any time being able to say good-bye to the people of Puerto Rico on the field?

YADIER MOLINA: Yes. Obviously Vázquez is going to catch, but we'll give him a chance for the people to say good-bye to him and Martin to say good-bye to the people of Puerto Rico. It can happen.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

